

Association for Dental Education in Europe

On the Retirement of

Majella Giles

No one person has done as much for the Association for Dental Education in Europe and the three DentEd Projects as Majella Giles. She was the heart, soul and engine of these projects. Unobtrusively, without ever seeking recognition, she brought the multifaceted elements of the workings of these organisations together from the needs of the individual participants to the administrative imperatives, financial controls, audit, travel and conference arrangements. She compensated for omissions of well intentioned though less well informed officers without ever making them aware of her ameliorating interventions. She is the archetypical diplomat both locally and internationally. Her skills played a major role in advancing constructive developments with the American Dental Education Association and the International Federation for Dental Educators and Associations. She was the coordinator of three Global Congresses in Dental Education, which were held in Prague, Singapore and Dublin as well as dental education meetings



spanning all continents. She facilitated the European Dental Students' Association integrating their needs with ADEE activities.

On a personal level I was given credit for so much that was attributable to Majella's insight and vision for which I will be forever grateful. Majella is a uniquely gifted and selfless person and she and her husband Pat deserve a well earned rest in their retirement. She has our heartfelt gratitude and respect for her successes and dedication to international dental education over the final two decades of her professional career.

She will be greatly missed but I am sure she will serve as a sagacious advisor to her successor Denis Murphy to whom I wish every success in stepping into such dainty shoes.

Derry Shanley

ADEE Past-President and Principal Investigator of DentEd III

Relations between the United States and the EU would be dreadful if not for Majella Giles, at least in dental education. Majella is the thread that has bound all of us together since our first collaborative initiatives back in the late 1990s. It was her embrace that truly enhanced and promoted our common causes; her embrace of ideas, her embrace of technology, her embrace of politics, and most importantly, her embrace of people. And, all of it was done in the magical way that only Majella could provide. All of us who work in global dental education owe Majella a debt of gratitude. She truly bound us all together in a unique way that will be very difficult to replace. All of us at ADEA join those of you in ADEE in thanking Majella for her work. "Go raibh maith agat".

Richard W Valachovic DMD MPH President and CEO ADEA America

Majella Giles has been a great and hugely valued supporter of my work as Editor of the Journal of the Association. We have had countless, frantic (on my part!) telephone conversations, most frequently in the run up to the ADEE Annual Meetings when she has managed the operation of abstracts and posters with proficiency and great attention to detail.



The role she has carved at the heart of the organisation is a very special one and will prove to be a significant challenge to follow, but things must move on. It is our collective responsibility to recognise this and to offer every support to Majella's successor, as they gain experience and benefit from working in the centre of the extended ADEE family.

Every encounter has been met with grace and good humour; we have laughed so much about many things. Her innate professionalism and truly masterful skills of tact and diplomacy have proved invaluable to the Executive Committee and to me, personally. She has a rare combination of abilities: the intellect to engage in issues of strategic importance to our mission for dental education in Europe; coupled with a profound and very real interest in individual members and their circumstances.

I would like to send Majella and her family every possible good wish for their health and happiness in the years to come. It has been a complete pleasure to have had the opportunity of working closely with her. I will always remember this time with great affection.

Michael Manogue Editor in Chief

European Journal of Dental Education

Dear Majella, soul and mother of ADEE

How are you, I have heard that you want finish your work for ADEE. Should we, your children of the big ADEE family, be alone in the daily communication jungle? But we know, Pat needs you and you need a rest from alarm mails arriving day and night. We will miss you, your tremendous knowledge, sensitive communication skills and understanding around ADEE and all members in general and individuality.

I have been member of ADEE for 18 years and saw the association growing and flowering. From the first moment I felt the strong leading force of Derry Shanley and the soft guidance from Majella Giles. The first decade was exciting and so important for convergence of dental education in Europe. You, Majella, did the most difficult work of all organisation for Dented visits and visitors behind the big father Derry. With your help, Majella, I found so many friends and started thinking in European dimension. It was in this time a honor and pleasure for me to present you my hometown Dresden and host you in our house. These moments were especially fulfilled from deep friendship and understanding.

During my presence in the EC and my presidency you were most helpful as organizer, left and right hand and the most important memory. We arrived in Brussels with your great help and couldn't have so much success without your talent and straight, open minded thinking.

Dear Majella, thank you so much for all what you have done in the last decades for us and ADEE for your great Irish hospitality and for your warm heartiness. My wife Ingrid and I wish you all the best and a healthy future with your family

Winfried Harzer ADEE Past President



Some ten years ago ADEE started a process of professionalising. Its aim was to strengthen the continuity of government and policy-making, to grow in numbers of membership and attendance at meetings and to initiate a growing influence in European care and educational development. In order to fulfil this, an administrator and office were needed. Majella Giles was the dreamed administrator: very well informed, responsible and independent, loyal and trustworthy, and always good-humoured. She made my time as Treasurer and Secretary General not only an easy but also a very enjoyable job. Maybe her greatest qualities, and for ADEE most importantly, was her discretion and excellent social skills. But above all Majella is someone easy to like, a warm personality. I will never forget her singing Irish folksongs at the rear of the bus returning from a Celebration Dinner to the hotel.

Majella, thanks for your support, for correcting my poor English writing, but especially thank you for your friendship and companionship.

Henk Kersten ADEE Past Treasurer & Past Secretary General

Over the years we have worked together in the framework of ADEE and also of DentEd. You have given so much of your talents and energy to facilitate and improve European cooperation and friendship in the field of Dental Education.

ADEE as an organisation has grown tremendously and become a real family of dental educators thanks to your endless activities as administrator.

You have always done this in your charming way. We thank you so much for what you have given to us all and I wish that you will keep fond memories of these fruitful years and that you may enjoy retirement and a long and healthy life.

Fons Plasschaert ADEE Past-President and Principal Investigator of DentEd III

When Majella was asked during the consultation process three years ago about her opinion on ADEE, she replied “*I love ADEE*”. It is apparent to everyone participating in the ADEE meetings or whoever contacted her for any reason that Majella perceives ADEE as a beloved family member, rather than as an ordinary everyday job.

That is what makes her so special and so efficient in the management of the Association and the annual meetings. That is why she will be greatly missed from all of us, the rest of the ADEE family.



ADEE moves forward. A new highly qualified administrator is taking over to further advance the administration of the Association and the cooperation among the membership. Majella has left a permanent mark in ADEE’s history, making her name synonymous with the important European projects (DentEd, DentCPD), the establishment of the offices in Dublin and the qualities of professionalism, grace, kindness and managerial skills that characterise her.

Argyro Kavadella ADEE Treasurer

It is amazing how all the requirements for an excellent administrator for an organization like ours can be found in Majella! I remember her as a prompt organizer, attentive host and helpful hand to all in ADEE at all occasions let alone her being a talented singer. With her personality, inborn talent and capabilities ADEE has been able to grow from so called the deans' travelling club to the esteemed professional organisation with European voice in dental education. It has been easy to

represent the ADEE having Majella taking care of practicalities, preparing notes and standing by my side smiling.

Dear Majella, you have been the one and only Lady ADEE, thank you so much and enjoy your free time after hard but precious work for ADEE.

Heikki Murtomaa ADEE Past President

Dear Majella, as you know I took the responsibility and honour of succeeding Derry Shanley as Secretary General of ADEE, I do not want to remember how many years ago. Already then you were PA of Derry and since then we had lots of things to share and interact. During these years it has been a privilege to work with you, always with a positive attitude and a great smile. I wish you all the best Majella, with all my love

Mariano Sanz ADEE Past Secretary General



What to say about Majella's major contributions to ADEE? Well, no doubt, others will mention her hard work and commitment in the ADEE office over many years. They will tell you of her phenomenal memory for people and their backgrounds. Also, her welcoming smile, and always kind words, for everybody on their arrival at the Annual meetings. Certainly, I would strongly support all of these sentiments that you will, no doubt, hear from the other contributors. However, may I sum up Majella and her character in a very personal story? In 2009, whilst I was President, after a short illness, my dad died in a little village in North Wales. Others will know how tough such times are, and my experience was no different, with a very emotional ceremony in the little 14th century church where I had been christened. Imagine my surprise when I saw, following me out of the church, Majella together with Derry Shanley. They had flown from Dublin to

Liverpool early that morning and driven for some hours through England and North Wales. It was a wonderful and kind gesture that is typical of them both. When I said that they really shouldn't have gone to such trouble, Majella said that the Irish always 'go the extra mile' to support their friends in such situations. It was a great effort, was wonderfully kind and I was so grateful for their support and friendship on a difficult day. That gesture summed up Majella's commitment, wonderful character and personality perfectly. I don't think I need to say more, other than to again express my thanks for her support that day, and indeed all the days that I was on the Executive and was President. Have a great, enjoyable and deserved retirement Majella!

Malcolm Jones ADEE Past President



Majella Giles joined Trinity College Dublin, firstly in the IT department within the College. Having lost her for a while to the more attractive shores of Jersey, Majella returned to Ireland, Trinity College and its Dental School, where she played a pivotal role in the ceremonies to mark the opening of the new Dental School and Hospital in 1998. Nobody undertakes this role, of consummate diplomacy, as well as Majella, a skill to the fore in the setting up of the International Federation of Dental Education Associations (IFDEA) in 1998 at a dental educators' meeting celebrating the quarter-centenary (400 years) of the University of Dublin, Trinity College. Under the leadership of Mariano Sanz, Derry Shanley and Erik Hjorting Hansen, together with Pal Littleton Executive Director of the American Associations of Dental Schools (now ADEE). In turn, this facilitated school visitations and convergence in standards of dental education programmes across Europe with special emphasis on the countries about to expand the European Union from 15 to 27. Two global congresses on dental education (2001 Prague and 2004, Singapore) ensued, neither of which would have happened without Majella's skills and attributes, a huge amount of background work, often into the small hours, a well chosen word

here and there, anticipating and trouble-shooting, ever before the senior academics became aware that there might have been a problem, if ever they did. In 2007 it was Majella who quietly masterminded the most successful third Global Congress in Dublin where the then President of Ireland, Mary McAleese launched the reconfigured International Federation of Dental Educators and Associations (IFDEA). It is often said that no-one is irreplaceable but ADEE without doubt, has lost one of its greatest advocates in Majella Giles, championing the cause, albeit quietly in the background. Ever before globalisation became a buzz word for Trinity College, Majella was way ahead in championing the internationalisation agenda from the School of Dental Science. Majella's greatest contribution to European dental education was articulated by her seminal role in the three DentEd projects, which brought about the identification of common competences throughout the EU. She exemplifies, in a most understated way, all that the European Community epitomises in the facilitation of sharing intellectual resources towards the common good of the wider community.

June Nunn Dean Dublin Dental University Hospital